

# Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Case Study for A Call to Action #4  
In My Backyard



## Alternative Transportation System

NiceRide kickoff with St. Paul Mayor Coleman

### Project Profile

#### Urban Community

Minneapolis--St.Paul, MN-WI

#### Partners

Nice Ride Minnesota (and Private Sponsors), Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota, Mississippi River Fund, the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Metro Transit, Minneapolis Public Works, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the Minneapolis Riverfront Corporation, Mississippi River Trail, Inc., as well as local, regional, and state agencies and organizations.

#### Successes

Partnership enthusiasm and involvement has been notable, which is important because MISS does not own or operate any of the land in the park.

#### Challenges

With limited funding being a challenge, MISS will be working with its partners to identify creative ways to fund priority projects, which includes applying to the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) and creating a joint powers board that could apply for TIGER grants and other federal sources.

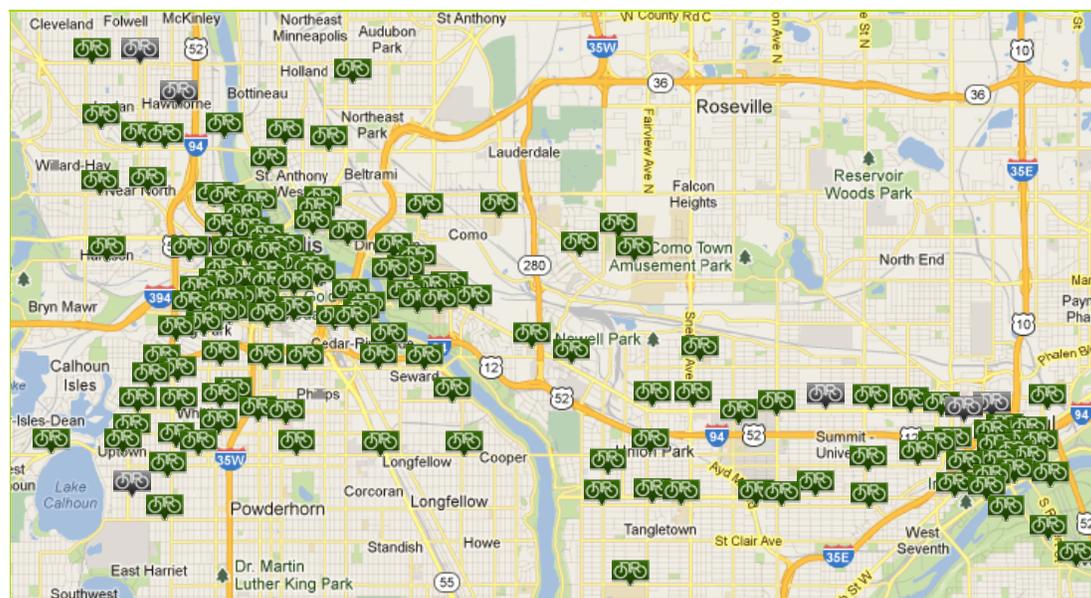
### Project Summary and Need

The goal of the [Mississippi National River and Recreation Area \(MISS\) Alternative Transportation System \(ATS\)](#) is to improve access to the Mississippi River and park destinations via improved transportation access and connectivity to MISS without a car. This is being accomplished through the development of an alternative transportation system that improves transit system integration, transportation options (bike-share, kayaking, light rail), data, maps, and communications. The goal is a seamless and recognizable system that builds on existing infrastructure and partnership efforts.

### Measurable Results

When complete, the MISS ATS will have a significant impact including the following.

- Population Served: 3 million residents (forecasted to be 4 million by 2030)
- Miles of Trail Gaps Complete: 1.5 Miles
- Nice Ride Stations Installed: 40 total
- Vehicle Trips Averted: 7,440 car trips in the park
- Resulting Emissions averted: 1,029,000 lb. carbon emissions/year
- User Guides Distributed: 23,000



**Legend** Active Upcoming Special Event Out of Service

NiceRide Station Map

## Project Contact

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## Case Study Purpose

The Director's [Call to Action #4 \(C2A4\)](#) Team has prepared this case study to provide a concrete example of a C2A4 project, which work to better connect national parks in urban areas with their gateway communities.

## Need Assistance?

The C2A4 Team has reviewed funding applications, created Federal Lands Access Program [guidance](#), and has documented C2A4 projects. This Case Study also serves as a type of assistance for C2A4 projects. Please contact the C2A4 team if you have any further questions.

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## Acknowledgements

The C2A4 Team would like to thank Susan Overson from MISS for providing us with information on this project.

## Principles

This project fulfills principles of all the C2A main themes:

- Connecting People to Parks
- Expanding the NPS Mission
- Preserving America's Special Places
- Enhancing Professional & Educational Excellence

The project fulfills [America's Great Outdoors Principles](#):

- 2 Enhance Recreational Access and Opportunities
- 3 Raise Awareness of the Value and Benefits of America's Great Outdoors
- 4 Engage Young People in Conservation and the Great Outdoors
- 6 Establish Great Urban Parks and Community Green Spaces
- 9 Protect and Renew Rivers and Other Waters.

## Timeline

**2010** - MISS developed an Alternative Transportation Plan (ATP) with several goals, including enhancing access and increasing visitation to and along the Mississippi River without increasing congestion through improved integration with surrounding transportation systems. A key goal was to integrate the system with a 72-mile stretch of the Mississippi River Trail, a 3,000-mile national millennium trail from the headwaters of the Mississippi River in northern Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico.

**2011** - MISS began working with partners to define and create a seamless Alternative Transportation System (ATS) that serves its visitors and achieves goals of the MISS ATP as well as goals of America's Great Outdoors (AGO) and the NPS Director's A Call to Action (C2A).

**2012** - MISS developed an online [scoping tool](#), created by [HDR, Inc.](#), to identify eligible projects for implementation and an online [mapping tool](#) for multi-modal trip planning, created by the U.S. DOT [Volpe Center](#). The link for the mapping tool will be up soon at: <http://www.nps.gov/miss/planyourvisit/index.htm>. Note: Volpe has been very involved with defining the Alternative Transportation System, including a node evaluation and 5-year implementation plan, mapping tool, oversaw the ATP workgroup, and assists the park with funding requests.

**June 2012** - MISS partnered with [Nice Ride MN](#) to install 30 new bike share stations along the river in St. Paul, to overcome the challenge that no single transportation system serves visitors or connects area residents to the river and its major destinations. The bikeshare system is the missing link for accessing river destinations. Funding for the St. Paul stations came from NPS Category III funds.

**February 2013** - MISS received additional Paul Sarbanes Transit in the Park (TRIP) FY 2012 funding to install 17 additional bike share stations in the traditionally underserved neighborhoods of North Minneapolis. These stations will be installed in 2014. The C2A4 Team provided assistance by reviewing this TRIP application.

**Spring – Summer 2013 (planned)** - A pilot project, which includes 24 more bike share stations, transit improvements and signage, will be implemented in Minneapolis. (Funding is from FY 2012 TRIP award)

## Under Development

- Improved user guide, A Mississippi River Companion, to integrate transit, map data, physical maps, and social media presence. Current user guide [here](#).
- [Ranger on Call Program](#) at Nice Ride Stations
- Alternative fuel vehicle shuttle plan
- Collaboration with partners, including Minneapolis–Saint Paul International Airport, on destination marketing
- Multimodal improvements to transportation nodes (including ADA improvements)
- Five year Multimodal Transit Facility Plan, Gap Analysis and Construction

**August 2016** - MISS Goal to have the ATS system completed in time for the NPS Centennial Celebration.

## Ballpark Costs

- Cost per bike-share station: \$53,000 (with bikes)
  - \$46,000/station - covered by TRIP
  - \$7,000/bike - covered by Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Average cost per mile of trail: \$1 million/mile
- User Guides: \$25,000 for development (maps, writing, images, layout), \$23,000 for print



NiceRide users include MISS rangers